







REPORT  
ON THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH  
IN THE UNITED STATES



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# REPORT

ON

## THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN THE UNITED STATES

BY

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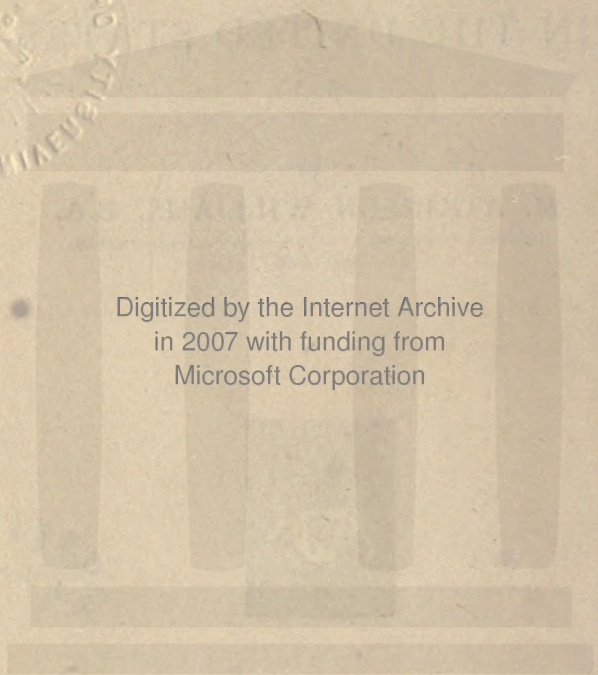


REPORT

THE TEACHING OF  
IN THE

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

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TO MY FATHER,

WHOSE INTEREST IN MY WORK HAS ALWAYS BEEN  
A STIMULUS AND HELP, THIS LITTLE BOOK IS  
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

## PREFACE

THIS brief report, the record of a very interesting half-year's work, was written for the University of London, as one of the conditions under which the Senate awarded the writer a Gilchrist Travelling Studentship. It has been duly approved as giving satisfactory evidence that the studentship was used for the purpose designed by the Trustees.

In it is incorporated, by the courtesy of the Editor, the substance of an article on "English in the American Elementary School" which appeared in the *Journal of Education* for July, 1907, and also of a paper read before the Battersea and Wandsworth Educational Association in May, 1907.

The writer desires to acknowledge gratefully the great kindness shown to her by the various Educational Authorities and the many American Teachers with whom she came in contact, who, by their willingness to put their syllabuses of work at her disposal, their frankness in discussing methods and results, and their generous enthusiasm for their work, did so much to make her stay in America both pleasant and profitable.

June, 1908.

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# REPORT

ON

## THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN THE UNITED STATES

### SECTION I

#### SCOPE AND AIM OF ENGLISH WORK WITH GENERAL REMARKS ON METHODS USED

As the holder of a Gilchrist Travelling Studentship, granted to me by the University of London, I was enabled to spend the autumn of 1906 in the United States for the purpose of seeing something of the teaching of English in that country. I should like to thank the Senate of the University for the honour thus done to me, and to assure them that I have endeavoured to avail myself to the uttermost of the opportunity thus generously afforded to me. To one like myself, who had been in Training College work uninterruptedly for some ten years, this studentship was a real boon ; one is apt to get into a groove, to see things from a limited outlook, and to lose one's sense of proportion, and a complete break like this, with the necessary travelling entailed, and a definite and absorbing object in view, was most refreshing and stimulating.

In these days, when it is something of a distinction for an English teacher not to have been to America, and when all have a more or less definite idea of American methods and ideals of education, I cannot hope to report anything very new as the result of my experiences, nor to contribute anything of real value to the general stock of ideas on educational work ; but I can, at any rate, give another point of view, for, after all, each of us sees things through his own spectacles and interprets them in his own way. In putting together a brief account of what I saw in American schools and colleges I am certainly clearing up my own ideas, and sorting out, for future guidance, methods of which I approved or disapproved, and so making for myself a more definite impression of my experiences, which, if it does nothing else, should at least make me a more useful unit in the body corporate of English Teachers.

I propose, in the following pages, to give an account of the work of the schools and colleges, mainly as I actually saw it in operation, with as few statistics as possible, as these may always be obtained from official sources, and in a short report such as this, may easily mislead. I shall try, where the subject admits of it, to make comparisons between the methods and work of America and England, as far as my knowledge of the systems in these two countries goes, and shall give my impressions of the relative values of each. It will be convenient to deal with the various topics under the following headings and in the order indicated :—



- Section I. Scope and aim of English work in America, with general remarks on methods used.
- „ II. Training in spoken English.
- „ III. „ „ written work.
- „ IV. Reading and Literature courses in the High and Normal schools.
- „ V. The connection between the Public School and Public Library.
- Appendix. List of Educational Institutions visited.

*Places Visited.*—I was absent from England just fourteen weeks; this gave me nearly twelve weeks in the States, and during this time the work of the schools and colleges was only interrupted for the two days' holiday given at Thanksgiving. I visited some seventeen different towns and cities in all, mainly in the States of Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, and Illinois, several of these being country towns of about 50,000 inhabitants, and little townships, rather like a large English village, with a population of three or four thousand. In these latter the people were either engaged in agricultural work or employed in the one or two factories round which the town had sprung up, and were largely of the working-class type. I thus saw not only the school work of large cities such as Chicago and New York, which is always—as is that of London—more or less highly specialised and developed, but something of the work in the rank and file of the smaller schools of the country, so that I got a

fairly general idea of the work done in the particular States I visited. I found, on the whole, that better work was being done in some of the smaller places than in the big cities ; there was less rush, less show, and often more scope for the originality and personality of the teacher. This was particularly evident in the conduct of several little country Grammar and Primary Schools in the States of Massachusetts and Illinois.

*School Classification.*—I may perhaps say here, for the benefit of the uninitiated, that, as a rule, in the States, a child's school life, where there is no Kindergarten, begins at six, when he enters the first grade. There are in the elementary school some eight grades, the first four or five being called the Primary, and the rest the Grammar grades. When the latter are taught in a separate building, as is still the case in the smaller places, the schools are known as the Primary and Grammar Schools respectively ; when all are in one building, the school is called the Public Elementary School. After these grades have been passed through, the average pupil, at the age of fourteen, either leaves school or enters on the four years' course in the High School, or Technical School ; from thence those who continue their education further are eligible for a University or Training College course. In any account of the work in English of the American schools it must be borne in mind that, speaking generally, there is no such thing as what we call free "secondary education" for American school children till they reach their fifteenth

year and enter a High School—that is, that the course in the Public Elementary Schools preparatory to entrance to the High School, and that preparatory to wage-earning at fourteen or fifteen years of age, are the same. This is a very different system from our own, for a certain proportion of our children (and one likely to increase, under the new arrangements for Secondary School work), by no means of the wealthy classes only, receive all through their school course a different education from that provided by the Elementary School, and an Elementary School child, who is considered a fit subject for this education, is often transferred to the secondary school at the age of eleven. As a result of this fundamental difference between the two systems one finds that the pupils in the first year of the High School course in America are by no means so well prepared in the more advanced subjects as girls of a similar age at home, who have had High School training throughout their school career ; but, on the other hand, owing to the differences of method and relative importance attached to different subjects, they can certainly express themselves orally, and on paper, a good deal more readily and fluently than the pupils who pass out of many of our Elementary Schools, though not perhaps so correctly as far as Grammar is concerned, in the written work ; and they often have a considerably wider acquaintance with the works of standard authors than our children.

*Normal Schools.*—The Normal Schools I visited differed



greatly in constitution as well as in the age and standard of attainment of the students. Some schools are under the control of their State, others of the city for which they provide teachers, others are attached to a University, while others again are established by private enterprise.

The State and City schools correspond respectively to our Elementary Residential and Day Training Colleges more nearly than the others. Their course covers normally a period of two years, and the students are of about the same age and come from pretty much the same social grade as our own. Conditions of entrance vary, but most of the students are graduates from a High School, and have done no teaching prior to their entry. Besides these courses for younger students, however, there are many, sometimes for one year only, for college graduates and older teachers who have had some years' experience ; and a college such as Teachers' College, Columbia University, New York, caters specially for such students, and does not permit a young girl who has only just finished her High School course to enrol herself as a member of any of its classes.

There is, in the State and City Normal Schools, an attempt to combine the continuation of the academic work of the schools with the professional training, but the latter is much the more prominent, and the purely academic study required is much more closely connected with the lectures and discussions on the methods of teaching the various subjects, than is possible in similar institutions at home under present conditions. This

means that a student from an American Normal School often gets excellent professional training, since she has devoted her main energies for at least two years to this side of her work ; but, on the other hand, her general education is often very inadequate, since it is little further advanced than it was when she left school at the age of eighteen.

*Scope of the Inquiry.*—I had intended, before I reached America, to confine my observations to the teaching of English literature in the High Schools and Normal Schools, but found it advisable to change my plans. The work in English literature is so bound up with the written work and the training in spoken English, and the work of the High School follows on so continuously from that of the Primary School, that it was absolutely necessary for me to investigate the English work as a whole in the various types of school, and I included in my visits such well-known schools as the Horace Mann, in connection with Columbia University, and the Ethical Culture school, both in New York ; the Francis Parker and the Elementary school of the Chicago University, on the north and south sides of Chicago respectively ; the excellent Friends' schools of Philadelphia, and even several smaller private schools, though, as fees are paid in all the schools I have just mentioned, they do not come, strictly speaking, under what the Americans call " public schools." At the end of this report a list of the places visited, and the various schools and colleges in each place whose work

I saw, is appended, in case they may be useful for reference.

*Relative Importance of English.*—In all the schools I visited I was struck with the fact that English, and particularly the reading of English literature, was given a place of honour and importance on the school time-table ; some of the best hours of the day were devoted to this subject, and often the greatest amount of time during the week was set apart for it. Thus, to take a few examples, I found that out of a total of  $23\frac{3}{4}$  hours school time per week in the grammar schools of Cambridge, Mass., in grades 4-9 no less than  $8\frac{1}{2}$  hours per week were given to English, and this, it should be borne in mind, does not include History or Geography or copybook writing. It is interesting to note that in the syllabus for reading a footnote is appended, to the effect that "a part of the school time should be for the purpose of cultivating a taste for reading," and that in these same schools Arithmetic only receives from  $3\frac{1}{2}$ - $4\frac{5}{8}$  hours per week. Again, in some of the schools of Chicago, which serve as practising schools for students in training, some 6 to 10 hours per week out of a total of 25 hours are set apart in grades 1-8 for reading, literature, and language training, this being more in the lower grades, where much language work is done, and less in the upper. I could multiply examples, but these are sufficient to show that in the American Elementary School English takes, as I think rightly, the place too often usurped by Arithmetic in the



English Elementary School. In the High Schools, on an average, one period every day was devoted to English literature or composition, and three or four of the English lessons each week, at least, required preparation at home. A certain amount of work in English literature was compulsory even in the more technical High Schools, and it was regarded by both teachers and students as one of the most important subjects.

*Scope and Aim of English work in American Schools.*—The aim of the work is rather different, in one important respect, from that in an old-established country like our own, and one of the objects of the teachers is, undoubtedly, to use the English language as a bond of union between the various nationalities which have sought a new and freer home in the States, and to make the English tongue which the little ones use at school the medium through which ideas of self-respect, liberty, and community of interests are communicated. But far and beyond this practical aim is the conviction that literature forms part of the moral training the school affords, and that, through good literature, the children may get clear ideas of right and wrong; that in books the noblest thoughts of great-hearted men and women lie open to the children; that they quicken the ethical sense, purify the emotions, strengthen the will to do well, and awaken the child to beauty, in spirit, as well as form and thought. We all wish these things for our pupils, and English as well as American teachers realise that even little children

can be trained to love and appreciate good literature ; but some of our Elementary School teachers still seem to feel that a child is wasting time if he is given a book to read and enjoy quietly by himself, and that, though poetry and stories are all very well in their way, yet the school hours are too precious to be spent on them. Not so the American teacher ; if anything has to be crowded out—and the overloaded time-table is an evil there as well as with us—it is seldom the literature lesson. The course in literature, in the eight years of the average child's school career, seemed to me to aim, at any rate, at providing sufficient material to keep the pupil in fairly constant and sympathetic touch with artistic prose and verse, to lead him to read more and more for himself, to put him in touch with authors who have written in the spirit of childhood, and to store his mind with a sufficient amount of good poetry and prose, to act as a guide for his future reading. Teachers in some of the schools were allowed more scope than in others, but suggestions are freely made for the guidance of young and inexperienced teachers, and it is really surprising to see how much ground is covered by a class in a school year. As an example I select almost at random from a syllabus in literature of the Evanston elementary schools, Evanston being practically now a suburb of Chicago, though municipally separate. The work of the seventh grade for one school year of about ten months is as follows :—

Selections from Longfellow's " Evangeline " ; " The Fringed Gentian " (Bryant), " The Burial of Moses "

(Mrs. Alexander), "The Nest" (Lowell), "Each and All" (Emerson), "The Recessional" (Kipling), Selections from "Snowbound" (Whittier), "The Last Leaf," "The Boys," "The Chambered Nautilus" (O. W. Holmes).

These ten are intended to be taken in more detailed form as literature, and to be the work, roughly, of each of the ten school months. For more general reading there are, in addition: "Tales of a Wayside Inn" (Longfellow) and "Ivanhoe" (Scott), to be read in the first half of the year, and "The Great Stone Face" (Lowell), "Snowbound," and O. W. Holmes' poems in the second half. This syllabus, it may be noticed, provides continuous work for the school course, and does not permit of the somewhat wearisome and lengthy revision which many English Primary Schools arrange for in their organisation.

Another syllabus, which I give below, is taken from the course in English in the schools of Medford, a small town in Massachusetts. The reading and literature course of study for each grade is divided into three parts, labelled respectively: I. Reading to the class and story-telling; II. Class reading; III. Selections for memorising. Here are the first and second sections for the fourth grade:—

*Reading to the Class and Story-telling.*—Stories from American history; Baldwin's Old Greek stories; Baldwin's old stories of the East; Browning's "Pied Piper of Hamelin"; stories from the "Arabian Nights."

*Class Reading.*—Hawthorne's Wonder-book ; Hans Andersen's stories ; certain specified poems of Longfellow ; Dodge's "Stories from American History" ; Andrews' "The Story Mother Nature Told" ; "The Swiss Family Robinson" ; "Black Beauty" ; Cook's "Story of Ulysses."

These, it will be seen, form fairly comprehensive courses for one year ; but a good deal of school time is given to both oral and silent reading, and the children are encouraged to read at home and to discuss in class next day the ground they have covered. Study periods are common in the work of the upper grades, and children who have mastered the main difficulties of reading are often left to read silently, while the teacher takes the less proficient.

*Influence of Harvard and Yale on work of High Schools.*—The High Schools still continue this training in literature, and their work is at present strongly under the influence of Harvard and Yale. These two Universities, it is well known, have in the last few years set themselves steadily to raise the standard of requirements in English for entrance ; other colleges have followed their example, so that a considerable amount of general reading is now required from students who enter any of the larger colleges. This has had the effect of levelling up the work in the High Schools considerably, and has, apparently, been very beneficial, though in some respects there is still a good deal of room for improvement. The English



course was the same during the fourth year in most of the schools I visited, being that required for college entrance, namely, "a careful study of five classics, and the reading of ten others" from a specified list of books. Some of the schools provided a general four years' course for students who did not intend to proceed to college, and a special college course, for the last year's work, for those who wished to go on to a College or University; but this was by no means usual, and in the smaller High Schools the question of staffing made it impossible, even where it was considered advisable by the authorities. This uniformity of syllabus in widely different localities seems to me to have its disadvantages; it does not allow for much individuality of taste on the part of the teacher. A wise teacher, for instance, who especially appreciated and was familiar with certain authors, would probably, if allowed to choose her own syllabus, do more to arouse the enthusiasm and appreciation of her class for literature than if compelled to follow the beaten track, excellent though it might be. Of course, this freedom of choice would be unwise with young and inexperienced teachers, but the majority of the High School teachers I saw were mature women with considerable general culture and wide sympathies, who might surely be given some voice in the matter of syllabus.

*Comparison between English and American Pupils.*—The college requirements in English literature included Shakespeare's "Julius Cæsar" and "Macbeth," George

Eliot's "Silas Marner," and Burke's "Speech on the Conciliation of the Colonies," as I soon knew to my cost, for it really seemed as though every school I entered conspired to hurl one or more of these masterpieces of our literature at my unlucky head, and that every High School pupil throughout the length and breadth of America must be reading "Silas Marner" and analysing with peculiarly American enthusiasm the character of Godfrey Cass. I found myself constantly repeating Rosalind's question, "Can one have too much of a good thing?"—and answering in the affirmative, with more and more conviction, as week after week went by, and still the American pupil dissected, with ruthless zeal, the character of that unhappy man. In spite of the monotony, however, I found that this uniformity had its advantages, as I could more easily compare methods. Shakespeare's "Macbeth," too, I had been reading, just before I left England, with a class of Elementary Training College students, and I was interested in comparing the different ways in which English and American students approached this play. The American boys and girls, usually about seventeen or eighteen years of age, and thus a year or two younger than the members of my class, were much more ready to discuss the play from the moral standpoint; were inclined to be hypercritical of details, and to differ among themselves in their estimate of the division of the responsibility for the murder of the King, between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth; but I doubt whether they had so real an insight into the characters, so thorough a know-

ledge of the play itself, or so sympathetic an understanding of the dramatic and tragic situations as the English students. They knew much more *about* the play, could talk glibly of its Time-period, the various Dramatic actions, the Climax and its Resolution, but they knew the play itself somewhat imperfectly, as a few questions generally revealed.

*Memorising of Poetry.*—In the High Schools little memorising of poetry is required, except in snippets; a quotation is sometimes required daily from each pupil in the English classes, and though this habit of committing to memory a few lines of poetry or prose especially beautiful or pregnant with meaning is excellent, it is by no means, to my mind, a substitute for the storing of the memory with considerably extended passages. I often found that a class, between them, could give the whole of such a poem as Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey," but that no one student could supply me with more than ten or twelve consecutive lines. This is a different state of affairs from what I found in the Elementary Schools, where a good deal of memorising is done and where plenty of variety is afforded, as the children do not all necessarily learn the same piece, and I have no doubt that lack of time is the cause of the cutting down of the memory work in the High School.

*Difference of Standard required by American and English Teachers.*—All the colleges do not insist on an entrance

examination, but accept candidates from certain schools which are approved of, if they bring a certificate notifying that they have passed through the required preparatory course and have satisfied the authorities of the school. This licence, though no doubt intended to do away with "cram work" and other evils attendant on examinations, sometimes has an evil effect, as there seems to arise from it a tendency to think that because a boy has "been through" a certain course, whether he has properly assimilated it or not, he is ready for college. I remember having pointed out to me at one school, in all seriousness, a boy of thirteen who was declared by his teacher to be "ready for college now"! That any lad of that age, however intelligent, could really be fit to enter on a course intended for young men in their nineteenth year seems to me to be open to question; on inquiry, I found that this boy had "gone through" the work required for entrance, in the way of having read the prescribed books and so forth, and I have no doubt he was a somewhat exceptional scholar. This little incident, however, illustrates a difference between the English and American teacher in the matter of standard. On the whole, American teachers seem to overpraise their pupils, and to require much less effort from them than we do. To hear a teacher say to a great lad with the down quite perceptible on his upper lip, "That's a very good thought," and "Yes, So-and-So, I am glad you are doing some thinking, though I do not agree with you," used to cause an amused wonder in my mind as to what a sturdy sixth-



form boy in one of our large schools would think were he so addressed ! The marking, too, was invariably higher than that of most English teachers, and it used to be a very common thing to find that for an English exercise no one in the class got less than 70 per cent of the marks, while many got above 85 per cent. I saw a very poor set of papers on Shakespeare's "Julius Cæsar," in a country High School I remember ; the composition, writing, spelling, and content were alike poor, and gave evidence of carelessness. The master, too, who showed them to me was very apologetic over them, and explained that the class was distinctly below the average, yet none of the papers had a lower mark than 64 per cent. In many schools to get below 70 per cent for a theme was considered poor, and below 60 per cent as equivalent to failure, so that when one got used to the different rate of marking one was able to approximate results rapidly, though even when due allowance is made for this, it seems to me that too great a proportion of the pupils were given 90 per cent or over, so that they would scarcely realise that there was a higher ideal to which they should aspire.

*Relation of Teacher to Pupil.*—The teaching of English, of course, varies enormously with the particular school and the individual teacher, but, on the whole, there are several marked characteristics of method which apply pretty generally. The American teacher, with the smaller class to deal with (I never saw one of more than thirty-five

to forty pupils, though I am told that in New York and Chicago and other large cities there are classes with many more pupils in them than this number), is both able and willing to give full play to the spontaneity, the originality, the initiative, and, above all, the individuality of the child. In no other subject is this so clearly seen as in the English work, which presents unusual opportunities. The children are encouraged to think, act, and speak for themselves to a considerably greater extent than we are accustomed to at home, and this, perhaps, helps to produce the peculiar alertness, both mental and physical, of the American child. He seems to me to be much brighter and quicker than his English brother, much more ready to be interested in things, to have more initiative in attacking a new piece of work, and to be much more responsive to the teacher ; but, on the other hand, to be more " bird-witted " and restless, less solidly capable, and less able to make sustained effort and to persevere in a difficult task. These differences are, of course, partly due to differences of race and temperament, to the more stimulating climate, and to the general conditions of American life, with its freedom from many of the restraints of convention and tradition ; and one outcome of these general conditions is, no doubt, the freer treatment of the children in the schools. As an illustration of the self-reliance and resourcefulness of the American boy, brought up in such a way, I may mention the case of a boy in my New York boarding house, who was about sixteen or seventeen years old, and who was preparing

for Harvard at one of the large private schools. He came, he told me, from a small town 1100 miles away, to which he intended to return as a lawyer after his college career was over—not, as he somewhat ingenuously remarked, that he was specially attracted to the study of the law, but because “there’s lots of money in it”! This boy, I gathered, had selected his own school from a short list of those recommended by his father, found for himself a boarding house, where he took his meals, and another where he slept, and, except for the hours actually spent in school, was in no way controlled or looked after by any responsible person. He had “stopped off,” he told me casually, on his long train journey, to make inquiries about a school on his list, but, after inspecting the school, he had decided that it would not suit him; “he didn’t like the look of it,” and so had continued his journey to New York, and made his arrangements there. This turning of the tables, and examination of the school by the schoolboy, rather than the reverse custom, would no doubt appeal to a good many British boys, but, on the whole, it does not seem to be a plan to be recommended, at any rate on this side of the water. It might, however, have a salutary effect on the schoolmaster.

## SECTION II

### TRAINING IN SPOKEN ENGLISH

*Importance attached to Oral Work.*—I pass on now to a more detailed account of the teaching of English, and wish to emphasise the training in the spoken language which all American children receive throughout their school course, from the Kindergarten to the University. This aspect of the work receives much more attention than with us, and is undoubtedly one of the causes for the fact that the American child, as well as adult, can express himself with a much greater fluency and ease than the average Englishman, who, one is constantly reminded, however, rather prides himself on his inarticulateness and tends to think of his American cousin's amazing flow of talk as "sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal"! Be that as it may, an American student can generally say what he means with force and vigour, if not always with elegance, and if he does indulge somewhat too freely in his own particularly American form of slang, he seldom leaves us in doubt of his meaning.

*Difficulties of the American Teacher.*—It must be remembered that the American teacher has an unusually



difficult task, as at present many of the school children are either foreign born or of foreign parentage, and, consequently, a large proportion speak and hear in the home a foreign tongue, or, at best, very imperfect English. Foreign idioms, incorrect verb conjugations, wrongly used prepositions, are among the more common faults due to this factor in modern American life, though it was refreshing to find that the letter "h" has no terrors for the American child, who uses it correctly without apparent effort. Such mistakes as "He is lots older than me." "I am going on the school," "I got to go," "You better give it up," "I done it," are common in both spoken and written language in the schools, and the teachers wage ceaseless war against them with somewhat doubtful success. When all these difficulties are considered, however, it is really wonderful to notice the results obtained by this rational method of dealing with language. American children are accustomed to express themselves in class at much greater length than English children, and so do not tend, when called upon to give a connected account of something, to trail off into unintelligibility, or to break down utterly, as is so often the case with English children. Even older students here are sometimes hopelessly unable to express their thoughts at all adequately, and one frequently hears "I understand what you mean, but I cannot express it," or "I haven't said quite what I meant," or "No, I<sub>d</sub>idn't mean that exactly," and other indications of a lack of sufficient early training in spoken English. Of course, one realises

that the American girl usually has little or none of the reserve and diffidence which mark many an English schoolgirl in her teens, but is rather pleased than otherwise to express and analyse her feelings before her fellows, and one would not for an instant wish to do away with the modesty and self-restraint which are part of the charm of a healthy, wholesome English girl; yet, on the other hand, many of our girls are too inarticulate, and their lack of power to express themselves freely is often due to a certain stolidity and unimaginativeness which themselves arise from an insufficient supply of simple stories and poetry, with their accompaniment of oral expression, during the first few years of school life.

*Early Training in Oral Work.*—In the kindergarten and the first three grades the English work is mainly oral, and, speaking generally, reading is not begun till the child has entered his seventh year, i.e. the first school year, as reading is not as a rule taught in the kindergarten; this, it will be seen, is somewhat later than in our elementary schools. The teachers seem to realise that a child should be able to express his thoughts clearly in words before he does much formal reading and writing, and that, on the whole, the boy or girl who has a limited vocabulary, who expresses himself confusedly and inadequately, probably thinks just as confusedly and inadequately. The teacher of language in America, as I saw her, had few formal lessons; but through the telling of stories and their reproduction by the class, the singing,

memorising, and repeating of suitable poetry (R. L. Stevenson's "Child's Garden of Verses" is a universal favourite), the children gain a considerable vocabulary early in their school course. The dramatising of their nursery rhymes, fables, and fairy stories helps greatly, and in all these ways the children's imagination is quickened and their sympathies awakened by the delightful old nursery rhymes and stories which should be the heritage of every English-speaking child.

I had an opportunity of seeing a good deal of this early work in language and literature at Springfield, Massachusetts, a town of about 70,000 inhabitants, where there are excellent free Kindergartens, as well as ordinary grade schools. There is in the poorer neighbourhoods a considerable foreign element, and some of the school children were little Russian Jews; it was a great pleasure to see the bright, happy faces of these little ones in their new environment. They told all kinds of fables and fairy stories, Grimm's and Hans Andersen's among them, and then acted them with great delight. This dramatising is a great feature of the literature courses; it gives the necessary opportunity for exercising the ingenuity of the child; it gratifies the natural dramatic instinct which most little children have, and the children enjoy it immensely. "The Three Bears," "The Indians and the Jack-a-Lanterns" (a peculiarly American story, and a great favourite), "The Tidy Angel," "Jack and the Beanstalk," were all acted in one school for my benefit, and I shall not soon forget the fervour with which

a very pretty little girl of about six took the part of the giant in the last-mentioned thrilling story, nor the wise way in which her teacher gently restrained her undue excitement. In one class a little coloured boy was telling the others a story as I entered, and the way in which he connected the different elements of the story, approached the climax, and gave the necessary explanation of the characters introduced, as well as the language in which the story was told, were all indications of his early oral training. I have seen similar work, and just as good, in some of our own infant schools, but it is not so universal here, and the training in language is not, as a rule, continued so systematically into the standards. There is a good deal of what is called "oral composition" in the lower classes of our own Elementary Schools just now, but this seems mainly used by the teachers as a help to written composition, and the children's individual efforts at sentence-making are often collected and written on the board by the teacher in the form of a simple composition. This is a different thing, and though valuable certainly as a preparation for the difficulties of written work, is not a substitute for the practice in speech as a means of expression of thought and its communication to others. It cannot be too strongly insisted on that we have a spoken language which differs in many respects from the literary, and that what would be perfectly correct for a child to say in conversation would often be unsuitable for expression in written form, which is necessarily less flexible and lacking in the spontaneity of



natural unstudied utterance. In American schools much of the early oral training is deliberately designed to train the children in spoken English rather than to serve as an addition and help to the reading and composition lessons.

*Morning Exercises in American Schools.*—The morning exercises in the elementary schools are interesting from the same point of view, though they are, naturally, of a more formal nature: different pupils selected from most of the grades take it in turns to mount the school platform and sing or recite—declaim, as they say—for the delectation of the rest. This is made an opportunity for the inculcation of patriotism, and many of the recitations are extracts from the speeches of Lincoln, Webster, and other famous Americans. I was in America for Thanksgiving Day, and the schools were preparing for this festival for weeks beforehand. I heard, in a Chicago Elementary School, three small boys of the fourth grade, who, between them, gave an account of the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers, and the ultimate establishment of the Republic, one taking up the tale as the other finished, the whole being evidently taken from a history of the United States. The prose was excellent, and the children declaimed the piece with vigour and feeling. On hearing, afterwards, that the two visitors present were English ladies, one small gentleman expressed much regret at what he felt must have been painful hearing to us, i.e. the account of the separation of the colonies, and added

generously that had he known we were coming he would have selected something that would not have hurt our British feelings ! This part of the English work is made much of in schools with a large foreign element ; the children learn and recite prose extracts dealing with great crises in American history, and very quickly learn to be proud of their adopted country. I remember now, with amusement, the air of pride with which a little boy, in one of the children's clubs of the Jewish " Educational Alliance " in New York, told me that " *We* beat the British " in the reign of George III, while his bright, mischievous little face, sparkling with his appreciation of the humour of the situation, and his somewhat marked foreign accent, loudly proclaimed his Ghetto origin.

*Abuses to which this branch of the work is liable.*—I think there is a distinct danger in some of the schools of overdoing this rhetorical work, and of substituting excellence in saying a thing for excellence of the thing said ; this, together with some of the work of the many school debating societies, seems to encourage a facility in the use of specious arguments, and a fatal fluency which may easily deceive the hearer as to the main point at issue, and even carry away the speaker in the flood of his own eloquence. For instance, I feel rather doubtful of the advisability of urging young people of school age to take, occasionally, in debate, the side with which they do not agree, for the sake of practice in argument, as I heard one teacher advise a class to do. Many of the teachers, however,

realise the dangers arising from this branch of the work, and there seems to be a general feeling that it needs to be developed with discretion.

In the High Schools the morning exercises often take the form of dramatic recitations by the pupils, in presence of the whole school of some thousand or more pupils. I heard a good many of such performances, but was not particularly impressed by their excellence; the lack of restraint, the somewhat theatrical use of gesture, and the high-pitched, often harsh voice being alike unpleasing to an Englishwoman, though the pieces were generally in very good taste, and the youthful performers lacking in self-consciousness and abounding in zealous energy and the desire to please.

*Connection between Oral Training and Literature Work of the High Schools.*—The actual literature lessons in the High Schools are closely connected with this oral training, as many of them take the form of the "Recitation," in which pupils may be called on to give somewhat lengthy summaries of the work prepared at home, or to elucidate or discuss some special point. I give a few examples of recitations of this kind, heard in the different classes of the High Schools; it will be noticed that they are somewhat of the type set by English teachers to be answered in written form, rather than the oral.

*1st Year.*—*Subject:* "Sleepy Hollow," W. Irving's Sketch Book. Give a careful description of the school-

master; the school-house; the catastrophe connected with the ghost incident.

*2nd Year.*—*Subjects*: I. "Silas Marner." Describe the effect on Marner of the loss of his money. II. "Ivanhoe," chapters 20–25. Give a summary of each chapter. Describe the capture of Torquilstone Castle, with reference to the plan of the castle given in the book.

*3rd Year.*—*Subject*: Shakespeare. Give a connected account of Shakespeare's early life.

*4th Year.*—*Subject*: Comparison between the "Antigone," as example of Greek tragedy, and "King Lear," as an example of English tragedy. Discuss the poetic justice of "King Lear." Compare Cordelia and Antigone.

*Criticism of Methods used.*—Though as a rule the language of the pupils was constantly corrected where necessary, and their power to express themselves adequately was considerable, yet there were certain weaknesses which made themselves evident to an onlooker. These seemed to me to lie in the toleration by the teachers of certain inelegancies of language, and an undue use of colloquialisms and even slang. If the pupil expressed his ideas vigorously and fluently, the teachers were not always careful to insist on his paying due respect to the dignity of the English language. Here are a few of the expressions I noticed, which were allowed to pass uncorrected. "That got him quite a bit rattled, and he did nothing." "I don't think Wamba had much use for



Athelstane, anyhow." "She started to tell him." "I didn't have time to finish." Even in a class of University students, one, in giving a character sketch of Shakespeare's Cleopatra, said, "She could twist Antony round her finger, like a bit of baby ribbon!" and this, though smiled at by the class, was not criticised by the professor for its lack of dignity, or the incongruity of the simile. Similarly another student on the same subject said, "She was fond of playing with men as we play with trout, but when the last and biggest fish was gone, she did not care to live."

The methods used in the actual conduct of a literature lesson, when not in the form of a recitation, are pretty much the same as those I have heard at home, except that in the English lessons, as well as in the other school work, the pupils' judgments and opinions were constantly asked for, and much more freely given unsolicited. I used sometimes to think that these crude judgments, especially when they took the form of criticism of literary subjects, about which the pupils could know but little, were not sufficiently corrected by the teacher, whose maturer experience should surely count for something. Her opinion on the subject was by no means final in the minds of the children, who seemed to me to be praised occasionally by a teacher more zealous than discreet, not for the individual effort of thought they had made, but because their judgments differed from hers. I have heard teachers say to their class, "I am glad you are all thinking so differently from each other"; "I am glad

So-and-so does not think as I do ” ; and “ I don’t suppose we shall come to any definite conclusion ” ; and speaking generally there was often an absence of any attempt at balancing one point against another, and coming to some sort of decision. American teachers seem to realise more strongly than we do the individuality of the children and their right to their own opinions, and though this is an excellent factor in their training, it is quite possible to overdo it and to sacrifice the rights of the class to the individual, as we too often sacrifice the individual child to the class. This frank expression of opinion by the pupils is specially noticeable in the High Schools, though one meets it everywhere. I used often to be amused and a little indignant at the way in which these budding authors criticised Scott and even Shakespeare. “ If I had been writing ‘ Ivanhoe,’ I shouldn’t have wasted time on all that description of scenery ; nobody wants to read that ; they want to know what Rebecca did next.” “ Why does Scott use that old bugle to interrupt all the exciting things in this chapter ? Whenever he gets to anything interesting, ‘ At this point the trumpet sounded,’ and that stops everything ” ; and again, “ If I’d been Shakespeare, I wouldn’t have talked about clocks in the time of Julius Caesar, I know.” These are some of the comments I heard in the schools. American teachers are so afraid of imposing their own opinions and tastes upon the children, and so anxious that they shall develop their own bent, that there is a little danger that some of these young people of the

present generation may grow up without enough of that friendly and judicious guidance on the part of a sympathetic elder which is so helpful in the formation of the tastes and habits of later life.

## SECTION III

### TRAINING IN WRITTEN WORK

*Composition in the Elementary School.*—From the methods used in the oral work, I pass on to those used in the written. Great pains are taken with the composition, and the methods employed by the teachers are less formal in the early stages than those I have seen used at home, though it is to be noticed that composition is taught in a most elaborate manner in the High Schools. The earliest written work is carefully planned so as to come within the scope of the children's limited experience and to ensure that the child has something to say, before he is set down to say it on paper. In discussions with teachers, I found that many of them preferred to set simple subjects about which all the children knew something and could reasonably be expected to write a few sentences, rather than the reproduction of a story or previous lesson, which often came later in the course. Thus, one class of beginners was instructed to "Tell me on paper about some of the red things you saw yesterday";—another set to "Tell about the picture on page so-and-so of your book"—which the children were allowed to



have open before them. The picture was a reproduction of the Lion of Lucerne, carved in the face of the rock. The work of these little folks varied considerably, from a really finished account by a rather precocious young person of about nine, who informed her teacher that she had "aimed at unity," to the somewhat bald statement of the more normal little girl who had produced the following: "There is a lion in the picture. He is lying down." In many of the schools the children of the upper grades write a short composition every two or three days (often at home), and frequently choose their own subject, which is submitted to the criticism of the class if it is required to be within certain limits, and to the final approval of the teacher. I used to ask to see the exercises for the day of any class I happened to enter, so that I might be sure of getting the ordinary class exercise, neither better nor worse than the everyday work. I usually found a pile of themes on the teacher's desk, awaiting her correction, and was invariably allowed to look through them as I pleased. In one school the children had evidently been allowed to choose from several subjects selected by the teacher, and had been given a week or two in which to look up their subject. American children are taught to make use of books of reference and dictionaries, and I gathered that several of these children had consulted books in the public library. Each exercise was accompanied by a statement of the time spent in preparation and the time taken in actually writing the theme. I was interested and a little touched

to find that one exercise I chanced upon, on the subject of "Slavery in the States," was written by a little coloured girl in the eighth grade; she had collected a considerable amount of material, and had treated her subject with a matter-of-factness and impersonality which would scarcely have been expected when one considers the intense race feeling which exists in the States. The only feeling she allowed herself to express was contained in the following sentences, "Planters in the South did not see the evil of keeping men in bondage," and "The North had prohibited slavery and it was doing all it could to stop the extension of it to any new State. They felt it was a disgrace to the country." That she had been keenly interested in her subject seems clear from her somewhat naive statement at the end, which I give verbatim. "I spent one hour and a half on studying this, and one hour and sixty minutes for wrighting."

*Illustrations of topics set.*—Other subjects I came across in the elementary schools were "Housekeeping," "A Walk," "A Stormy Walk," "Playing Robinson Crusoe," "Can Animals Think? Why do you say so?" In the exercise headed "Playing Robinson Crusoe," a girl described with a good deal of force an adventure she and a friend had had in a boat, which got adrift, upon discovering which, as she remarks candidly, "I was all of a flurry, but Phyllis kept her head." I give in full, exactly as they were written, two short exercises which serve to illustrate the kind of work produced by the children in

the higher grades. They are both, I think, a fair average, and are interesting, the first as showing a dawning sense of humour, the other because it is written by a boy, evidently from experience, on a topic which would not appeal to many English boys of the same age.

### “THE WIND ON A FROLIC.

“After Mr. Wind had had his breakfast, he went outdoors to look around. It was a fine day, and he felt fine, too, so he went into the house and put on his coat and hat and started off for a frolic.

“He went through the pine woods, and all the trees groaned with shame that they should have to bow down to him.

“Soon he reached New York city. As he was going up Sixth Avenue, he saw a rather stout man come out of a house and walk down the street.

“A little ahead of him was a piece of ice that had not melted. The wind was out for a frolic, so he blew the man’s hat off his head. The man was surprised, started suddenly, slipped and fell, when he recovered, he found his wig lying in the street near him.

“Mr. Wind did not stay to see the result of his frolic but went down the street and soon found himself opposite a grocery store.

“A little girl came out of the store, just then, with a basket of eggs. The wind thought this was a good chance for him, so he blew so hard that it took her off her feet, and she sat down in the basket of eggs.

" Mr. Wind did not stay to see the result of this frolic either, but hurried out to sea. As he was going along, he was caught by a sail and made to push the boat to the harbor. As the sail released him he thought that he would go home, having worked off most of his energy."

This is evidently influenced by some story or poem on the subject of the wind, although it is, in itself, supposed to be an original piece of work.

The next runs as follows :—

" A BABY FRIEND OF MINE.

" The baby I am going to write about is a little boy that is visiting us.

" He is twenty-one months old, and has light hair and beautiful blue eyes. He is a very cheerful little fellow and always happy. His name is James, and he can talk as plain as a boy five or six years old.

" Whenever I meet him in the hall upstairs when I am going from one room to another he will usually take hold of my hand and pull me into his room and ask me to build some blocks and houses.

" He is always awake in the morning before the birds are up, and you can hear his merry little voice all over the house.

" When I take him out to ride in his little go-cart, he always asks to see the chu-chu-cars, and a great many times when I take him down to the center of the town where the watering trough is he will ask for a drink because he sees the water.



"He is quite different from most babies in one way, and that is he calls his mother Mother and most babies say Mamma. He is at the age now when he says cute things. The other night at the supper table he called his father hubby and a few days ago he called him Jim, just because he had heard his mother call him that and he calls himself Jammy Dowe."

In another school (the Ethical Culture, where the children mostly come from wealthy families) I found the children of the seventh grade much interested in the selection of subjects for an essay. They had been told to think of, and send in on a slip of paper, a title for an essay which was to be neither descriptive nor narrative, but one involving careful explanation of some point. The teacher was reading out the titles, and the children were criticising them as I entered; here are some of them. "Going up in a balloon," "Sewing," "Machinery," "How a telegram works," "Life and times of one of the Men of Harlech," "The bravest of the brave," "Farming," "My trip to Washington." I remember that the class almost unanimously rejected "My trip to Washington" and "The bravest of the brave," in spite of the alluring titles, as involving the one description and the other narration, and so, not conforming to the conditions laid down, and the authors agreed to choose another subject.

*Verse-making in the Elementary School.*—Another form of composition of which I found examples in the schools was that of simple versification; this seems to me valu-

able if used with discretion ; it makes demands on the children's constructive imagination and power of consistent thinking, it sets free the pretty fancies of which the little heads are often full, and gives free play to that instinct for rhythm (not necessarily rhyme) which most children possess. These attempts at verse-making are, of course, crude, and of no intrinsic value, but they are all interesting to the observer of child life. Here are some which were supplied to me in an article on " Language teaching in the Grades," by the superintendent of schools in a small town of eight thousand inhabitants, in the State of Illinois, where I spent a couple of days school visiting. These followed on the songs and poems which the elementary school children had been reading, learning, and singing, in the autumn. One child brought in her verse without any suggestion on the part of the teacher. She was allowed to read it to the others, and the teacher said, " Perhaps others might like to write about Autumn, too." Nearly all did so. The following are two of the attempts :—

- I. I saw the leaves as they came down  
*There collors* were red yellow and brown  
 They lay all over the ground.  
 The wind will *sun* [soon] blow to call them to bed  
 Goodby yellow brown and red.
- II. Autumn has come  
 Autumn has come  
 The *squirels* are *chattring* and having *there* fun,  
 Gathering stores  
 The nuts fall by fours  
 Putting them in *there* little brown cellars  
 By *scors*.

These are the poetical efforts of little third grade children. The first contains three, the second five spelling mistakes, but both show an appreciation of rhythm and a good deal of observation. The next two are the work of the fifth grade. The children had had a lesson on the colours of leaves, and in the language lesson were told to look out at a grove opposite the school windows, then at the height of its autumnal beauty, and after they had looked for a few minutes they were told to write in four lines of poetry or prose what they had seen. All chose poetry. Here are two stanzas :—

- I.       The leaves of October  
          Are red and, green and, brown  
          But about the time October is gone  
          The leaves are in slumber town.
- II.     The big tall tree all dressed in red,  
          The big mother said it is time for bed,  
          She took off my pretty bright gown  
          Add put on a homely brown night gown.

The last sample of versifying I give is selected from the work of children of the fifth grade, in the Elementary School of the University of Chicago ; it is one of several written on the subject of Spring.

*The Spring*

Now the joyful spring has come,  
And the bees begin to hum,  
Soon we'll gather wild wood-flowers,  
From their many fragrant bowers.  
The violets too will raise their heads,  
From their many earth-ground beds,  
And the dandelions free,  
Will be here for you and me.

Thus the winter passes out,  
 With the children's joyous shout,  
 And the many little flowers  
 Raise their heads from April showers.

*Comparison of Results with those in English Elementary Schools.*—All this work is a very far cry from the themes I used to write for my governess as a small girl ; one I remember especially, I wrote on the subject of Autumn. It began in a little stiff, formal way, " In autumn is the time when the fruits are ripe," and continued in the same conventional strain. I knew it was wrong to put " In autumn is the time," as soon as I had written it, but could not sacrifice the neatness of the page to the accuracy of the composition. The penmanship was prim and cramped, the spelling was correct, and the whole thing was formal and dead. These, on the other hand, are full of life, of interest, of spontaneity.

In all this early written work, I must frankly admit, the writing and spelling were far from good, and were much worse than those of English children of the same age ; the papers, too, could not by any stretch of imagination be called neat, but in spite of these faults, one felt that the children were gaining in scope, in power, in freedom from conventional phrasing, in initiative, in self-expression, and in the exhilaration which comes of conscious accomplishment.<sup>1</sup>

*Class Criticism of Themes.*—A special feature of the written work, in elementary as well as High Schools, was the reading by teacher or child of the exercise, and

<sup>1</sup> See note on p. 84.



the frank criticism of it, both for form and content, by the rest of the class. This was usually quite good-humoured, and in no way personal; the children seemed to accept it as part of the day's business, and it made the whole thing much less a private affair between one child and his teacher, and much more something in which the class, as a whole, participated. If I remember aright, the deadly sin was to write something "awful dull," or "too long drawn out," or "not a bit interesting."

*Rhetoric in the High School.*—The composition in the High Schools is made the subject of somewhat elaborate treatment, and innumerable books are written on "rhetoric" for the guidance of the student. Hitherto, the pupil has been taught to write fairly correct English, and to put his thoughts on paper with considerable freedom, and he has learnt, in the Elementary School, the use of capitals, punctuation, letter-writing, and other elementary details connected with written work. In the High School he is, at any rate in the first two years, put through a somewhat formal drill, which centres round the paragraph as a kind of literary unit. He is taught to treat with becoming reverence and respect its Unity, Coherence, Force, Elegance, Proportion, Consecutiveness, Variety; he learns that it may be Descriptive, Narrative, Reflective, even at times Explanatory, and that there is a style peculiar to each of these kinds of paragraph. He is exercised in selecting from standard essays and histories, the topic of each paragraph. This, he is told, is Topical

Analysis, and when he has had practice in this work, he is set to illustrate the various characteristics mentioned above. Sometimes the process is reversed; he is himself to make a list of "Paragraph Topics" on some given subject. Then eight or ten students will be sent to the black-boards to write a paragraph on a topic selected by the teacher from the literature lesson, and these will be criticised by the teacher in the presence of the whole class, special pains being taken with the grouping of points and the cutting out of irrelevant matter. A set of second year students in one class I visited wrote paragraphs in this way on some of the poems of Milton they had recently been studying. Some of the subjects were "The appeal to the senses made by Milton," "Lycidas as a Pastoral Elegy," "The Unity in Lycidas, does it exist?" "The Parallelism between L'Allegro and Il Penseroso," "A Summary of the various themes in 'Lycidas.'" The work was well within the powers of the students, and the paragraphs were remarkably well written and ably criticised.

*Criticisms of Methods Used and Results Obtained.*—All these technicalities were so constantly referred to by the teachers, and the more mechanical framework of literary expression brought so much into prominence, that the students seemed to me to be overloaded with instructions as to how to write, and rules which they must bear in mind when they did write, with the result that they must sometimes have been hampered, rather than helped.

In spite of all this careful instruction, the general standard of written work in the High School seemed to me, so far as spelling and style of expression are concerned, to be distinctly below the work of English High School pupils of the same age. No doubt there are weighty reasons for this which must be sought for outside the schoolroom; the High School in America is not the counterpart of the English High School, save in name only. High School education in America is free, and many of the pupils come from homes where the standard of culture is low, and have not the advantage of literary associations. Society, too, is in a much more unstable condition than in England, prosperity and refinement are not associated, even to the extent that they are with us, while the proportion of pupils of foreign parentage in the High Schools, though not so great as in the elementary school, is yet considerable. In the schools themselves, however, lies one important reason; the pupils do not seem to me to take sufficient pains, they are more careless than English students, and their spelling is often deplorable, such errors as "hear-after," "straitened" (for straightened), "lead" (for led), "dispair," occurring in a set of fourth year papers I saw in a Chicago High School, and "conflaragration" (for conflagration), "speach" (for speech), in a similar set of second year papers. Such mistakes as "Cæsar remain were buried" (for "Cæsar's remains"), "We filed into church and *seat* ourselves," "This is the work of pupil's," "The school provides an easy *means* of *healthy* food," "He is lots older than me,"

"I saw him disappearing *in* a hen-house," were all made in one or two sets of papers and cannot all be excused on the ground of the foreigner's lack of acquaintance with the idiom of the English language.

The teachers take enormous pains with the English work, and are convinced of the necessity for much of the drill in rhetoric which I have described. They say that to many of the pupils, even in the High School, English composition needs to be taught much as one teaches that of a foreign language, and that since this method has been adopted, there has been great improvement. Many schools supply specially printed forms on which the composition exercises are to be written, with a complicated series of hints on style and arrangement, and a key to the instructor's marks; others provide each pupil with a "Theme-card," which is to be referred to in the same way. I give an example of each below, and wish I could be sure that the pupils made as much use of them as did the teachers. A little less trouble on the part of the teachers, and a little more insistence on a careful revision of the work by the pupils themselves before handing in a theme, would, I feel sure, remedy these defects more effectively than the most elaborate set of printed rules that the ingenuity of the American teacher could devise.

*Subject Matter of Themes set in the High Schools.*—What the American scholar lacks in form, he, however, often gains in content, and it is notorious that, in many of our



own elementary schools, correct spelling is made a fetish of, to the detriment of the composition as a form of expression. Correct spelling is valuable, certainly, but we can buy it too dear—and perhaps the revolt in the American school against attaching undue importance to it is only the swing of the pendulum in the other direction. The subjects I came across divided the work of composition pretty evenly between that which was apart from the school course, and required the student to fall back upon himself for inspiration and thought, and that which was more closely connected with the English Literature Course, and which often required considerable reading as a preparation. I found, in one school, that the students of the fourth year were required to write three original stories and one poem, in another, a similar class wrote an autobiographical sketch, after having read some of the writings of Kipling, Kenneth Grahame, and others who have given us, in literary form, recollections of childhood. Another class had written, as a school exercise, on “Some Childish Recollection.” I glanced through some twenty of these papers, and found a good deal of originality and variety, as well as indication of that power of, and delight in, introspection and self-analysis which many Americans possess. Here are a few of the subjects. “The Fraid-i-cat” (Anglicé Coward); “Cabbages and — Things”; “Thuthie Thmith”; “Two boxes of Candy”; “One of my first Christmas Trees”; “The marvelous Uncle”; “At Church.” Imagination as well as recollection had so

# — HIGH SCHOOL

## DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

### *Theme Card.*

"The foundation of all right expression is sincerity."

#### *General Directions.*

- Use the Theme Book provided by the Instructor.
- Fill out the card, and paste it in the middle of the cover.
- Leave the first two pages for Contents, as in a printed book.
- Number the pages following the Contents.
- Place the title at the head of the theme.
- Indent the paragraphs.
- Write only on the left-hand page.
- Use black ink, and write with a coarse pen, in a clear, legible hand.
- Be careful to space the words properly.
- Leave a margin, as in a printed page.
- When the book is returned with the Instructor's marks in the margin of the theme, correct on the right-hand page.
- Any violation of the above rules for the mechanical form will require the work to be rewritten.
- If there is an error (rhetorical) in a sentence, the sentence must be rewritten.
- An error in the method of paragraphing will require the theme to be reconstructed.
- Particular attention is called to words underscored, and to words or clauses corrected by a line.

#### *Key to the Instructor's marks.*

- A. Ambiguous.
- C. Condense.
- Con. Lacks connection.
- D. Diction faulty.
- E. Expand.
- F. Lacks force.
- H. Mistake in capital or head letters.
- L. Illogical.
- M. Figurative language defective.
- Ms. Bad manuscript. Theme must be copied.
- O. Obscure.
- § Paragraph wanting, or not in the proper place.
- P. Punctuation faulty.
- R. Repetition.
- S. Spelling faulty.
- T. Transpose.
- U. Lacks unity.
- W. Weak. Theme must be rewritten.
- ? Statement doubtful.
- ( ) Passage to be omitted.
- / Sentence or clause must be reconstructed.
- Something omitted.
- x Some obvious fault.

One of the above marks appearing at the head of the Theme indicates that the fault is a prevailing one.

Works on Rhetoric which are recommended :

Carpenter's "Elements of Rhetoric."

Genung's "Practical Elements of Rhetoric."

Pearson's "Freshman Composition."

Number page here .....

"AIM AT UNITY OF THOUGHT AND VARIETY OF STATEMENT."—Dr. F. N. Scott.

	I. Manuscript	<b>a</b> Legible	1 Letters 2 Spacing 3 i's and t's
		<b>b</b> Capitals	
		<b>c</b> Hyphens	
		<b>d</b> Italics	
		<b>e</b> Quotation marks	
		<b>f</b> Punctuation	1 Comma 2 Semicolon 3 Colon 4 Period 5 Question-mark
	II. Words	<b>a</b> Formation	
		<b>b</b> Good use	1 Verb 2 Possessive 3 Spelling
		<b>c</b> Precision	
		<b>d</b> Simplicity	
		<b>e</b> Brevity	
		<b>f</b> Variety	
	III. Sentences	<b>a</b> Correctness	1 Complete 2 Subject and verb 3 Participle and noun 4 Pronoun and antecedent 5 Case 6 Shall, Should 7 Infinitive
		<b>b</b> Unity	
		<b>c</b> Mass	1 Beginning 2 End
		<b>d</b> Coherence	1 Order of words 2 Parallel construction 3 Precise conjunction
		<b>e</b> Variety	1 Periodic and loose 2 Long and short
	IV. Paragraphs	<b>a</b> Unity	1 Topic Sentence 2 Length moderate
		<b>b</b> Mass	1 Beginning 2 End 3 Proportion
		<b>c</b> Coherence	1 Order of sentences 2 Parallel construction 3 Precise conjunction 4 Tenses
	V. Theme	<b>a</b> Unity	Summary in one paragraph
		<b>b</b> Mass	1 Beginning 2 End 3 Proportion
		<b>c</b> Coherence	Order of paragraphs

Based on Barrett Wendell's ENGLISH COMPOSITION

obviously played a part in the production of some of these themes that I made inquiries and found that a certain amount of licence in the matter of embellishment had been allowed. Here is one which has the ring of truth, and which, though not so good as many essays I read, shows something of the way in which these American pupils make use of their own experiences, and possesses many of the defects of expression to which I have referred. It is written by a girl, at the beginning of the fourth year course, and is awarded the mark B.

#### “ MY FIRST SORROW.

“ My sister Beth was two years younger than I, and was my only playmate, except our dolls of course. I can see her yet as she came to comfort me when I had shoved in the eyes of my first doll that went to sleep. The sun was shining on her bright hair, and tears gleamed in her big brown eyes, and for a second she looked to me like the pictures of an Angel in a book of mine.

“ A big porch, with a swing and hammock, at the side of the house was our favourite spot to play in, because a dear old lady with white hair, whose windows faced the porch used to sit and watch us play. We called her our ‘ Dear White Lady,’ and she would throw kisses to us, and send us candies. Sometimes we were even allowed to go and see her. But we saw her only in the summer time because in the winter she went to a warmer country.

“ One winter night, Beth went to another country.



We had been indoors all day, because it had been too cold for her to go out, and I had been allowed to stay home from kindergarten and keep her company. Early in the evening she became tired and was put to bed. That night, when I woke up, and there were lights in the house, Mama told me that Beth was sick, but I should not worry and go to sleep again, she would be all right in the morning. I went to sleep and dreamed that I saw Beth smiling and telling me how happy she was.

"The next morning they told me that Beth had gone away to God, but I thought like our own 'White Lady,' she had gone only for the winter. I wondered why everybody cried so about it because of course she would come back again, and all through the winter I waited for summer to come when she would return.

"But summer came and brought the 'White Lady' from the South, and still Beth did not come. There was no one to ask why, because Mama always burst into tears when I said anything about her, so I never asked. However, I told my dear lady all about it, and it was only when she told me that God had taken Beth to live with Him always that I realized that she would never come back."

Other subjects for essays in imaginative and descriptive writing which I came across were: "My Umbrella and I"; "A Breezy Corner"; "A Day's Fishing"; "Write a ghost story"; "Describe a fire"; "Describe a face with which you are familiar"; "Finish one of the following

introductions:" 'One day I saw . . .'; 'One day I found . . .'; 'I turned a bend in the road and . . .'" Most of the work was distinctly original and the pupils took the keenest interest in it.

*Connection between the Literature and Written Work.*—The connection between the written work and the literature is pretty close, and some very good work is done in the themes which are prepared out of class on some subject which the class is taking in the literature course. The students take different topics, so that there is greater variety when the themes are read aloud by the writers, in class. In one fourth year class, the following subjects had been treated by individuals, in connection with the study of Shakespeare. I heard some half-dozen of these read aloud, and was impressed by the generally high standard of the work. "German commentators on Shakespeare"; "Mrs. Siddons"; "Garrick"; "The various folios and editions of Shakespeare"; "The birds in 'Macbeth'"; "Holinshed's Stories"; "The technique of the drama"; "English critics"; "The modern stage." In another school, a paper was read on "The history of the Masque," in connection with the study of Milton's "Comus." Another class was instructed to write a theme in class on "The Character of Godfrey Cass, as illustrated by his relations with his father, his first wife, his brother, Nancy Lam-meter, Eppie, and Silas." The work was talked over first, and the teacher gave such sensible and practical

hints as "Be specific"; "Make your paper show that you are familiar with the story, but do not spend much time in rehearsing details"; "Allude definitely to events in the story, but do not detail them at length." In another High School the first year students had read W. Irving's "Rip Van Winkle," and had each brought into class a letter, written at home, purporting to come from Dame Van Winkle to an imaginary aunt, telling of her troubles in connection with her unsatisfactory husband. This was excellent practice, and I was greatly interested in the letters read by some of the pupils. They brought out such points for discussion as the correct date and address, within certain limits, the epistolary style suitable for the period and the occasion, the character of Dame Van Winkle as revealed by the letter, and the proper signature (i.e. not "*Dame Van Winkle*," as one student had put). The letters showed a considerable sense of humour on the part of the young writers, and an intimate acquaintance with and appreciation of the text.

*School Magazines and Year Books.*—Many of the High Schools have a magazine which is often published monthly and is entirely managed by the pupils, who undertake the insertion of advertisements, the printing of each instalment, the collection of material, and the financial responsibility. That there is little or no supervision by the school authorities is obvious from the faults of language which are common. I select the following speci-

men as a fairly typical example of the misuse of words :—

“ Mr. M. (dictating English Literature): ‘ Another of the Dramas is the “ Winter’s Tale.” ’

“ Pupil (expectedly) [obviously = expectantly]: ‘ What’s “ Tail ? ” ’ ”

*Characteristics of the Magazines.*—I obtained copies of a great many of these school magazines through the kindness of the Principals of the schools, and was thus enabled to compare them and estimate their relative values. Some are much more ambitious than others, and their publication must, one would think, occupy an unduly large amount of the spare time of the committee of pupils responsible for them. They are all written in a much more free and easy style than such magazines at home; colloquialisms and slang abound, personalities, too, are freely indulged in, much more freely indeed than would be permitted in an English school, particularly where the teachers are concerned. Plenty of scope for amateur story and verse writing is provided by these magazines, and though their literary merit is often a negligible quantity, they form a useful part of the school training in responsibility, esprit de corps, and co-operation. Where there is no magazine, there is usually published by each senior class in turn a year book, which besides giving portraits of the members, with an appropriate quotation for each, gives an account of the doings of the class, and aims at represent-



ing its particular characteristics. Some of these magazines and year books are most amusing and afford food for thought to the teacher, while they reveal to the stranger a good deal of that part of the life of a big American school which is lived outside the classroom. A series of parodies on old nursery rhymes in one year book, though rather trivial, are distinctly clever, and as they are so typically American I give some of them below.

1. I love my dear teachers  
    Their ways do me charm  
And if I'm not naughty  
    They'll do me no harm!  
So I'll not talk or laugh  
    But my lessons I'll do  
And then at 2.30  
    I'm sure to be through.
2. Weep, weep, the girls can't sleep.  
    The exams will soon commence.  
Some are sad, and some are mad,  
    But all are in suspense.
3. Senior girls, senior girls  
    How does your Latin go?  
Virgil's rhymes and awful times  
    With paradigms all in a row.
4. The *new* Mother Hubbard goes to the cupboard  
    To give her poor girls a test  
    When she leaves there  
    Of paper 'tis bare—  
The poor girls will tell you the rest!

5. I had a little pony, I called it Cicero  
 I lent it to a school-girl to raise her mark so low.  
 She inkéd it, she markéd it,  
 She took therefrom a page ;  
 I'll never lend my pony,  
 So great is my umbrage.
6. Mary had a pony small,  
 In cloth of brown 'twas bound,  
 And everywhere that Mary went  
 The pony followed 'round ;  
 But oh ! alas ! In Study Hall  
 It fell upon the floor !  
 The Teacher saw it !!!—And in school  
 Poor Mary rides no more !

*Free Indulgence in Personalities.*—An article in one magazine gave a farcical account of an imaginary day in the school, when the teachers and pupils changed places. This was, of course, an opportunity for much "taking off" of various teachers, and though there was no real harm in it, the taste of such articles is questionable, and one can see that they might easily be allowed to interfere with the discipline of the school. Indeed, the reason given by one Principal for the absence of a magazine was that it was too often an opportunity for pupils to speak disrespectfully and impertinently of their teachers.

*Specimens of Verse-writing.*—That I may not be thought to imply that all the contents of school magazines are on the level indicated by the previous extracts, I give the following verses, taken from different school magazines.

*A Portrait.*

*(By a pupil in the 1st Year of a High School Course.)*

Great-grandmother's portrait hangs on the wall,  
So high in the dim and old-fashioned hall  
That hardly a glimpse of her face is seen  
As over the banister railing we lean.

The famous lords and ladies fair  
Look down from their frames with a lofty stare,  
But grandmother gazes with quiet look  
On all who pass below her nook.

It seems that hers is the fairest face  
Of any there in her ancient race,  
For truth and honour shine in her eye  
The noble virtues for which men die.

*By the Sea.*

*(By a pupil in the 4th Year of a High School Course.)*

The waves that washed o'er the bare brown feet  
Of the girl of the Northern land  
Had kissed the feet of the Southern boy  
As he built his castles of sand.

The girl of the North dreamed of noble deeds  
Of knights who were valiant and bold;  
The Southern boy, as he molded the sand,  
Played he was a knight of old.

The waves that broke on her rocky shore  
Had dashed on his castle walls,  
When he rescued in fancy a bright-haired maid  
From the midst of his sand-built halls.

The broad, blue sea that stretched between  
To the boy and the girl was naught,  
For they crossed and met on Fancy's Bridge  
O'er childhood's Sea of Thought.

*Dream - Lilies.**(By a pupil in the 4th Year.)*

Dream-land lilies are shadowy pale;  
 Their heads are heavy, their stems are slim;  
 Their haunting odours faint and fail  
 O'er a land that is swaying and dim,  
 Dream-land music is sweet and far,  
 And strange as the sigh of a falling star.

Day-time flowers are dazzling bright;  
 Roses for passion and lilies for pride.  
 They flaunt in the sunshine and droop in the night  
 And wither unsatisfied.  
 The roses burn, and the lilies freeze,  
 The music shrills over shadowless seas.

Oh! dream-land lilies without a stain,  
 That sway and blow when the daylight dies.  
 Earth's roses surge by on waves of pain  
 Or wither like flame in the skies.  
 But, ye, through the dim eternity  
 Will lift your faces to gladden me.

There is a vagueness of meaning in these effusions, and a somewhat hectic tone about the last one, but I have no doubt they gave great pleasure to their youthful composers, and satisfied the craving for the expression of the emotions, especially the more gloomy and mournful ones, in which so many young folks in their teens exult.

One of the most un-English bits of school-work in the field of original writing is the statement printed on the back of a very handsome calendar which the children of the Elementary School of the University of Chicago were busy producing during my visit. I should explain that a printing-press had recently been set up for the use of



the children and that they had decided to print from it several hundred copies of a calendar designed by themselves, for which they took orders, charging the modest sum of fifty cents, to cover expenses. One of my generous friends at the University kindly sent one to me, and I copy from it the following statement, which gives, as no words of mine could, an idea of the modern American child, and his relation to his elders.

“Done in The Print Shop of The Elementary School of The University of Chicago, in Emmons Blaine Hall. The little shavers helped in binding ; next size took a hand in illuminating ; all sizes wrought the designs ; the big boys kicked the press—others looked through the fence and wanted to do it ; teachers helped when the pinch came ; parents set type and ran errands—everyone said, ‘ How Fine ! ’

“ Good for one full year and may every day in it be a lucky one for you !

“ The Best Work We Can Do.”

## SECTION IV

### READING AND LITERATURE COURSES IN THE HIGH AND NORMAL SCHOOLS

THE Courses of Literature in the various High Schools are too long to be conveniently quoted here ; there is usually, even in a detailed syllabus for all the High Schools of a large town, a good deal of choice allowed to individual schools, and the course is divided into sections, so many books from each section being required to be studied in each class. On the whole, the four years' course is comprehensive and very wisely selected. The students who complete it (unfortunately a very small percentage) have read many of the masterpieces of English literature, some as general reading, and some as more detailed study. An attempt is made to give the students a general idea of the history of English literature, and the characteristics of various periods. Some of the American authors of the second rank are given a prominence they hardly merit, but in American schools, this is perhaps natural.

*Reading aloud in class.*—The literature lessons I heard often took the form of discussions on the work prepared

at home, and the pupils took a very active part. The actual reading of texts, particularly Shakespeare, I thought a little neglected; much of this work was set to be done at home, and the stimulus of reading the play aloud, in parts, before teacher and fellow-students, was lost. I often asked the students to read aloud to me, from the literature they were studying, and I found they did not as a rule read well, the phrasing and emphasis were unintelligent, scansion was often neglected, and one had little pleasure in listening to voices often lacking in resonance and sweetness. The dramatic element was often lacking, in the reading of a play of Shakespeare, indeed, sometimes the parts were not even assigned to different pupils, and I distinctly remember the ludicrous effect produced by one student who, in taking the part of Macduff in Shakespeare's "Macbeth," exclaimed in a tone of cheerful alacrity, "Turn, hell-hound, turn!" This is by no means a solitary instance. American pupils are quick to feel and express their feelings, indeed they are extraordinarily responsive, so that their lack of success in this part of the work is probably due to the neglect of oral reading, in the higher classes.

*Teaching of technicalities of various kinds of literature.*—In most of the schools the pupils are taught to see and appreciate the mastery of technique in the different kinds of literature they study, and I heard some excellent lessons on the various sections of a drama, the art which underlies a good short story, the development of plot in

a novel, and the devices adopted by various authors to obtain certain effects. The pupils make elaborate time schemes of the plays of Shakespeare they study, and complicated diagrams illustrative of the interaction of the different underplots with the main plot, and in some schools, even estimate the relative values of different authors and poets by means of graphs. This is usually their own (not their teacher's, or any competent critic's) estimate, and I was amused to notice in one such graphical table, the very, very long way behind Shakespeare that Milton came, in the eyes of one student at any rate.

In illustration of this kind of work, I may quote a lesson I heard in a Philadelphia school to a first year class, on a short story from W. Irving's Sketch Book. With the teacher's aid, the class worked out the following points :—

1. The scene—where laid—just suited to story—why ?
2. Style—mainly narrative—partly descriptive.
3. Like all stories—this one has—

*a.* The main action. (Teacher told class that this is called by Brander Matthews "The centre of interest.")

*b.* Actors.

*c.* A suitable setting.

4. Relative importance of various actors, in so far as they develop the action.

5. Stories may have a supernatural, pathetic, tragic, or humorous tone predominating, etc.



The class decided that this story was pathetic, with touches of humour. Another class, of third year students this time, which was studying "Macbeth," was dealing with some dozen questions, of which the following are typical examples :—

1. Give the exciting moment, the climax, tragic moment, moment of greatest suspense—the catastrophe.
2. Give specific examples of three kinds of reaction against Macbeth.
3. Are the figures from the world of external nature, or from human life? Are they local, temporary, or universal?
4. What is the moral significance of this tragedy? In what does the tragedy really consist?

*Over-analytic work required from pupils.*—Besides the study of these various technicalities, another feature of the work was the analysis of character and motive. This was carried to a greater extent than I have had experience of, at home, and a good deal of the teaching seemed to me to be over-analytic, for such youthful minds, for it was by no means confined to the upper classes of the High Schools. For older pupils, say in the fourth year at the High School, and in the colleges, this work seems to me excellent, for an understanding of technique helps greatly in an appreciation of the greatness of the mind which conceived the masterpiece, and subordinated the technicalities to his needs; but younger minds are apt to lay undue stress on the mechanical structure and

to miss a good deal of the real beauty of the poem because they are striving so earnestly to find it. I should prefer that a healthy-minded boy or girl of fifteen or sixteen years of age should enjoy something of the fantasy and elusive charm of Rosalind and her companions in the forest of Ardennes, or of the romance of the beautiful Lady Rowena and the noble Rebecca, in a much more unconscious way than these American pupils do. Study of technique and analysis of character, though excellent, are carried to an excess, in my judgment, in many American schools.

*Normal school entrance requirements in English.*—A further indication of the importance attached to English is seen in the syllabus of entrance requirements published by the Normal Schools. I quote from the entrance requirements of the State Normal School at Framingham, Massachusetts, which is said to be the oldest Normal School in America, having been founded as far back as July, 1839, though not in its present situation. Besides the usual written examinations in the usual school subjects, and the examination in oral reading, we are told that "the candidate will also be questioned orally, either upon the subjects for examination, *or upon other matters within his experience*, in order that the examiners may gain some impression of the candidate's personal characteristics, *and his use of language*." A further note, headed "General requirements in English for all examinations," runs as follows: "No candidate will be ac-

cepted whose written English is notably deficient in clear and accurate expression, spelling, punctuation, idiom, or division of paragraphs, or whose spoken English exhibits faults so serious as to make it inexpedient for the normal school to attempt their correction. The candidate's English, therefore, in all oral and written examinations, will be subject to the requirements implied in the statement here made, and marked accordingly."

Similar requirements are demanded from candidates for all the Normal Schools, the object in each being the same as that given above, "to gain some impression of the candidate's use of language."

*Syllabuses in English in Normal Schools.*—I give now the outline syllabus in English from one or two of the Normal Schools, to show the relative importance attached to the pursuance of literary studies and the professional training for the teaching of English in the elementary school.

FROM THE FRAMINGHAM NORMAL SCHOOL, MASS.

#### ENGLISH

#### *Junior Year*

#### *Class work.*

(1) Training in oral English, as story-telling, and the reproducing of articles from standard current magazines.

(3) Grammar, with special attention to a logical and simple presentation of the subject to children.

(3) Discussion of work to be done in each of the elementary grades, and the making of plans for lessons.

(4) Criticism of written work, with incidental instruction in the principles of composition.

*Individual work.*

(1) Short themes, based on observation and experience.

(2) Reading of literature suitable for use in elementary schools.

(3) Training in the use of a library.

*Class work.*

*Senior Year.*

(1) " Words and their ways in English speech."

(2) Discussion of plans for teaching English.

(3) Literature.

*Individual work.*

(1) Literature : each student chooses an author whose works she studies so far as she is able.

(2) Themes based upon reading and upon some phase of school life.

In the Boston Normal School, the syllabus in English includes the following : Methods of teaching reading (including phonics) ; oral and written expression (including penmanship and spelling) ; the history and grammar of the English language ; literature, with especial attention to literature for children.

Some of the Normal Schools take a special literature course, apart from the pedagogical studies, for a certain period of the training course, when extensive study is thus made possible. In the large and prosperous State Normal School at De Kalb, Illinois, the students who



enter from a good High School and take the ordinary two years' course, take literature in the fourth term for four hours a week in class, with a good deal of out-of-class reading and preparation. This course, last year, ran as follows :—

*Literature.*—4th Term—two year course. Four hours a week. “ A study of Masterpieces illustrative of the different forms of literature. As types of the epic, the lyric, the drama, the essay, and the novel, the following are studied : The old English ballads, Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum*, Palgrave's *Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics*, one of Shakespeare's plays, Selections from Browning's *Dramatic Lyrics*, Selections from Lamb's *Essays*, and Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, or some other work of fiction.” Since this course comes in the fourth term, the students are expected to prepare for it by reading much of the work previously.

The methods of teaching literature and composition in the Normal Schools were pretty much the same as in the High Schools ; the same careful and analytic work was done in composition, and the same “ Recitations ” and discussions were employed in the literature lessons. The students seemed to vary even more than our own, in standard of attainment ; some of those from country districts were so far behind the others that a three and even four year course was insisted on for them, though they were allowed to enter the Normal School earlier than English students in such cases. The written work was

often poor, and needed much attention, weekly themes were set nearly everywhere, and in spite of this practice, spelling and composition left much to be desired. These defects, however, were generally found in the work of students who were of foreign extraction; many German and Polish names are seen in the lists of students, and, in the present state of the American population, it would be both unwise and unfair to exclude such candidates from the teaching profession, even though their English is not very idiomatic.

*Lessons on method of teaching English.*—I heard several excellent lessons on the teaching of literature, and found that much attention is paid to story-telling in the lower grades, and the discussion of the courses in English suitable for each of the school classes, particularly the books which might be read. Mr. Percival Chubb's book on the teaching of English is used as a text book in some Normal Schools, and I heard a very animated discussion in the Chicago Normal School on certain chapters of it, which had been previously read. The lecturer gave sound advice to the students, in the discussion which arose, on the subject of the foreign tongue spoken by many of the poorer children of Chicago in their homes, and called attention to the unsympathetic attitude often taken by teachers towards this, pointing out that respect for the mother tongue means also respect for good English. He advised the teachers to make use of the children's power to speak and think in two languages, and to make one

help the other, as we now do in many of our Welsh schools.

At another Normal School, the students were discussing the books suitable for reading in the various grades, and as they drew from their own experience largely, I was interested to hear what kinds of books these American students had read with enjoyment, as school children. I asked the question, "What books do you like to read over and over again?" "David Copperfield," "Robinson Crusoe," "A Tale of Two Cities," were promptly named by several students, though many gave as their favourites, books of the type of "The Wide, Wide World," and "Little Women." In a talk on the aims of story-telling, it was interesting to find that the same difficulties crop up among American students in training as among English. The usual anxious questions were asked about "the moral" which youthful and over-didactic teachers are certain that every story told in school should have, and whether the stories should be true, or purely fictitious, and if the latter, whether the children should be warned that they are not true, and so forth. One student cited, as an awful warning against story-telling, the case of a little boy of her acquaintance who had recently begun to attend Sunday school, and who had classed together in his little mind the classic myths and legends he heard in the day school, and the Bible stories of the Sunday school. These difficulties were treated sensibly and tactfully by the teacher, who reminded her class of the saying of Lowell that "Any things men have generally held true, have in them an element of truth."

*Continuation Work of the Normal Schools.*—I may point out here that the deficiency in the matter of general education in the case of the American Normal School graduate referred to in Section I of this report is not so serious as it sounds, as American teachers continue their studies long after their college days are over, not only for the first few years, but well on into middle life, with an enthusiasm and zest which it is good to see. The Normal Schools organise holiday courses during the long summer vacation and extension classes are often held throughout the whole session, in the late afternoons, for acting teachers. I found that many of these courses were connected in some way or other with the English work of the schools, Elementary as well as High, and that the teachers' experience gave much material for fruitful discussions of practical difficulties. A course of lectures to practical teachers, organised by the Chicago Normal School last autumn, lasted for eighteen weeks, and was largely attended. I give the syllabus, as throwing light on the interest in the teaching of English everywhere seen in America.

*Aim of the Course.*

The purpose will be to consider the place of literature in elementary education, the method of presenting it to children, and the principles which must govern in the choice of selections for children of different ages. The plan of study includes lesson papers, with references for reading, and the syllabuses of the lectures, together with a series of special reports from members of the class.



### TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is literature ?
2. The value of literature in the school.
3. The presentation of literature to children ; at different stages ; using various kinds.
4. Expression on the part of the child.
5. Pictures in the service of literature.
6. Kinds of literature suitable for children ; grounds of choice.
7. Stories for children, nature of story ; tests of a good story ; presentation of stories.
8. Classes of stories for children, their nature and value. Fairy Stories, Folk Stories, Kindergarten Stories.
9. Classes of Stories (continued). Myths and Legends, Animal Stories, Fables, Humorous Stories.
10. Classes of Stories (concluded). Heroic and Romantic Stories of Real Life. Bible Stories.
11. Miscellaneous kinds of Children's Literature. Songs and lyrics, nursery rhymes and nonsense literature. Quotations and proverbs. Prose sketches. Drama.
12. The teacher of literature. Her preparation and resources ; her opportunity, responsibility, and reward. A summary of the course.

I found several instances of clubs and associations formed by former students of Normal Schools for the purpose of studying English literature, or discussing the methods of teaching it ; thus, the former students of the Boston Normal School, most of whom teach in Boston,

have organised an English club which meets regularly "for the purpose of continuing the study of English Literature." It has already existed for ten years, and is still a flourishing institution. Chicago has a similar English club which is not only largely attended by former students of the Chicago Normal School, but is open to others interested in English literature.

The facility with which books may be obtained from the High School, Normal School, or public library is a great help in the development of all such organisations as these, and every effort is made to meet the requirements of students by the issue of the necessary books, with as little delay as possible. This leads to the last point on which I wish to report, the connection between the public school and public library.

## SECTION V

### THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL AND PUBLIC LIBRARY

*The various kinds of Library.*—The library, in America, is a very important factor in the scheme of public education. Many of the States have a "School Library Law," granting a certain sum each year to be spent on school libraries, and even where no such law exists, money is obtained and libraries are instituted by private enterprise on the part of the teachers and others interested in the schools. Many of the High Schools and Normal Schools have excellent libraries, which are freely used by the students; one Normal School library I visited contained 12,000 volumes, and was under the care of two trained librarians. In the Normal Schools brief courses of instruction in the care and use of the school library are often given, and suggestions are made as to the stocking of such libraries with suitable books.

*The Public Library.*—Apart from the school libraries, however, the public library itself is in much closer connection with the schools than is possible at present, at home, where the schools and libraries are under different control.

An interesting feature of many of the Education Departments in the smaller towns is the excellent arrangement by which the public library furnishes to the various schools some forty or fifty copies of the same book, which are lent for a few weeks, and then passed on to another school. In this way plenty of variety for the reading lessons in the Elementary Schools is provided, at a minimum cost. American education benefits greatly from the fact that the public school and public library are often under the same central control. This is a great factor in the cultivation of a taste for good literature, as the heads of the various departments work hand in hand, and the library provides for both teachers and scholars suitable books for reference, general reading, and study. To take but one example. I might quote the place of honour held by the dictionary in an American Elementary School. There is one large dictionary in each classroom occupied by the upper grades, and the children often have their own copies of an abridged one, and are taught not only how to use them, but to make actual use of them daily.

*Children's Department of the Public Library.*—The public libraries often have a children's department which is carefully organised and presided over by a librarian and several assistants, many of whom are college graduates, and have in addition undergone a special course of training for this purpose. Simmons College, Boston, and the Training Department of the Carnegie Library at Pittsburg are perhaps the best known institutes for the



training of librarians in America at present. I had the good fortune to meet one of the librarians of the Children's Department of the famous Carnegie Library, Pittsburg, and to learn from her something of the system of training and of the work among children. This library organises reading circles among the poorer children, and lends books to these small "Home Libraries," in different parts of the city, which are at some distance from the Central Library ; there is a story hour, too, several times a week, when trained and kindly assistants gather round them little groups of children from the streets and delight them with the fairy and other tales which take them, in imagination at least, far away from the dreary streets of this ugly iron town. Some of the other libraries have a story hour, and nearly all of them have a special children's room. In Boston I found a large children's room, provided with plenty of chairs and tables, where the children love to sit to read their favourite books, and where they were even allowed to consult books of reference and write their theme for the next day's school exercise. This room, on the occasion when I visited it, was full of children reading and note-taking, excellent order was kept, and the school librarians were busy in helping children to find what they wanted and in tactfully suggesting books to those who only knew vaguely that they wanted a book "'bout soldiers," or "'bout birds," or still more vaguely "something interesting." This part of the work of the children's department seems to me to be most valuable, if the librarians are women of educa-

tion and refinement, with some knowledge of, and sympathy with, children. That this help in the choice of a book is a real boon to children, all will agree, who remember, in their juvenile days, the aimless turning over of the leaves of the library catalogue and the attempt to choose a book chiefly by its attractive title.

*Public Library and the Sunday Schools.*—So anxious are the authorities to assist in this part of the children's education that the city librarians even send round to the Sunday as well as the day schools, lists of books suitable for teachers who need help in preparing their Sunday lessons, and others, which may be lent to the Sunday school library for a few months. I was present at a morning Sunday school, in connection with a church in Springfield, Mass., where the superintendent read out the following letter :—

“THE CITY LIBRARY,  
“SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS.

“*To the Superintendent of the Sunday School.*

“In these days of progressive teaching, when the Sunday school is adopting many of the methods of the day school, books and pictures are indispensable aids. To meet the demand, the City Library is constantly adding to its resources in both lines. Nearly a thousand pictures, embracing subjects in both the Old and the New Testaments, have been added during the past year to a collection that was already large. Teachers will find them

very helpful in illustrating their lessons. Last year a special list of aids for Sunday school teachers was printed. A few copies of this remain, and as long as they last may be had free upon application. Students of missions, too, will find many books at their disposal, together with lists of the best books for mission study. Both books and pictures may be borrowed for home use.

"Many Sunday schools freshen their libraries by supplementing them with the collections of books which the City Library gladly loans to be retained for several months.

"Will you call the attention of your teachers to these books and pictures, now, at the opening of the Sunday school year?"

"Very cordially yours,

---

"Librarian."

*Oct. 9th, 1906.*

I was assured that the teachers gladly availed themselves of the proffered help, and that this instance on which I had happened was by no means an unusual one.

From various statistics which I obtained I found that the American public makes a very large use of its libraries, and that the librarians do much more in the way of looking up references for inquirers, stocking books asked for by students, and keeping in touch with the syllabuses of instruction in the schools, than is done at present in England, where the conditions are different. The organi-

sation of the public and other libraries in America seemed to me worthy of all praise, and the system one that we might with advantage put into practice much more than we do at present; at any rate, in the establishment of new free libraries, if it is not possible to alter existing ones.

#### NOTE REFERRED TO ON PAGE 48

THE early Composition work in many of the Elementary Schools at home seems to me to be treated far too formally. The teachers lay undue stress on spelling, writing, and neatness. They talk the subject of the essay over before the children begin to write, and work out with the help of the class a black-board scheme to which the children are expected to keep. The result of this too often is that a dead level of dulness is attained, and one essay reads pretty much like another, with all the individuality taken out of it. I do not mean to imply that children do not need help in the orderly arrangement of their written work, but, when young children of nine and ten years of age begin to put their thoughts on paper, I should much prefer their teachers to encourage them to write freely and unrestrainedly till they have become somewhat accustomed to the use of the new medium of expression. The subjects treated in our schools, too, are often lacking in interest to the children, and do not arouse in them a desire to write; they write because they have to, not because they want to write.



## APPENDIX

### LIST OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS VISITED

#### *Public Elementary Schools—*

Shaw Grammar School, Wellesley, Mass. (Mixed).

Hunnewell Grammar School, Wellesley, Mass. (Mixed).

Concord Street Primary and Grammar Schools, Boston (Mixed).

Primary and Grammar Grades of the Practising Schools of State Normal School, Framingham, Mass. (Mixed).

State Street Grammar School, Springfield, Mass. (Mixed).

Eastern Avenue Kindergarten, Primary and Grammar Grades, Springfield, Mass. (Mixed).

Carew Street, Primary and Grammar Grades (Mixed).

Practising Schools of the Millersville Normal School, Pennsylvania. Primary, Kindergarten, and Grammar Grades (Mixed).

Thaddeus Stevens Schools, Primary and Grammar Grades, Philadelphia (Girls only).

Kosminski Schools, Primary and Grammar Grades, Chicago (Mixed).

Horace Mann Schools, Primary and Grammar Grades, Chicago (Mixed).

Practising Schools of the Chicago Normal School. Kindergarten, Primary, and Grammar Grades (Mixed).

Practising Schools of State Normal School, De Kalb, Illinois. Primary and Grammar Grades (Mixed).

Glidden School, Primary and Grammar Grades, De Kalb, Illinois (Mixed).

*Public High Schools—*

Brookline High School, Brookline, Mass. (Mixed).

Wellesley Hills High School, Wellesley Hills, Mass. (Mixed).

Boys' High School, Boston, Mass. (Boys).

Girls' Latin School, Cambridge, Mass. (Girls).

Cambridge High School, Cambridge, Mass. (Mixed).

Cambridge Technical School, Cambridge, Mass. (Boys).

Newton High School, Newton, Mass. (Mixed).

Springfield High School, Springfield, Mass. (Mixed).

Wadleigh High School, New York (Girls).

Brooklyn High School, Brooklyn (Girls).

Erasmus High School, Brooklyn (Mixed).

High School department of Normal College of New York City (Girls).

Boys' High School, Lancaster, Pennsylvania (Boys).

Girls' High School, Lancaster, Pennsylvania (Girls).

Girls' High School, Philadelphia (Girls).

Hyde Park High School, Chicago (Mixed).

Lakeview High School, Chicago (Mixed).

*Private Schools. (Many of these with several hundreds of Pupils.)—*

Miss Haskell's School, Marlborough Street, Boston (Girls).

Dana Hall (large private boarding school), Wellesley, Mass. (Girls).

Amity Street. Kindergarten. New York (Mixed).

Ethical Culture School. Elementary and High School. New York (Mixed).

Horace Mann Schools. Kindergarten, Primary, Grammar, High School. New York (Mixed).

Packer Institute, Brooklyn (Girls).

Educational Alliance, New York (mixed).

Miss Stahr's School, Lancaster, Pennsylvania (Girls).

Friends' Central Schools. Primary, Grammar, High Schools. Philadelphia (Girls).

Miss Hill's School, Spruce Street, Philadelphia. Elementary and High School Grades (Girls).

Elementary School of the University of Chicago (Mixed).

Kindergarten of the University of Chicago (Mixed).

High School of the University of Chicago (Mixed).

Colonel Parker's School, Chicago. Elementary and High School (Mixed).

#### *Normal Schools and Education Sections of Universities—*

City Normal School, Boston, Mass. (Nominally Mixed, but only one man).

Pedagogical Department of Harvard, Cambridge, Mass. (Men).

State Normal School, Framingham, Mass. (Women).

Normal Department of Ethical Culture School, New York (Women).

Teachers' College, Columbia University, New York (Mixed).

Normal School of New York City, New York (Women).

State Normal School, Millersville, Pennsylvania (Mixed).

School of Education, University of Chicago (Women).

City Normal School, Chicago (Women).

State Normal School, De Kalb, Illinois (Mixed).

*Universities and Colleges of University rank (not commented on in Report)—*

Harvard, Cambridge, Mass.

Radcliffe College. Women's Department of Harvard.

Smith College, Northampton, Mass. (Women).

Columbia University, New York (Men).

Barnard College. Women's Department of Columbia.

Brynmarw College, Brynmarw, Pennsylvania (Women).

University of Chicago (Mixed).

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